



# MADISON COUNTY

c o m m i s s i o n

November 2011

## News from Madison County Commission District 6 Commissioner Bob Harrison

### In This Issue

[100 Black Men of America  
Greater Huntsville Chapter  
Health and Wellness Fair](#)

[Madison County Commission  
District 6 Welcomes Dr. Louis  
Sullivan](#)

[Successful Aging Initiative](#)

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County Job Openings](#)

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2nd Annual  
Symposium on  
Poverty Sponsored by  
Madison County  
Commission District 6

TWO DAY EVENT

Friday 12/2/2011  
Roundtable Discussion  
5:30 PM- 9:00 PM  
Dinner Served

Saturday 12/3/2011

Greetings,

As many of you know we just celebrated Breast Cancer Awareness Month. I stand in solidarity with the many initiatives to raise awareness for such a noble cause. Knowledge is power, and the more aware we are the better equipped we are to make wise choices. Matters that effect our health are extremely important. This edition of the e-newsletter will focus on a theme of Health and Wellness. Our health is our most important asset, and we must be proactive and educated in order to live prolonged and healthy lifestyles.

Yours in Service,  
Bob

### 100 Black Men of America Greater Huntsville Chapter Annual Health and Wellness Fair

*Commissioner gives remarks at 12th annual fair.*

Commissioner Harrison gave opening remarks at the 100 Black Men Greater Huntsville Chapter Annual Health and Wellness Fair. The event was held October 1, 2011 in partnership Alabama A& M University. This is the first time the event has taken place in the new Alabama & M University Health and Wellness Center.

Community Resource  
Fair

9:00 am- 1:00 pm

Please call (256)532-  
1505 for more  
information

J's Special Occasion  
5080 Meridian Street  
North Huntsville, AL  
35810

Over 75 vendors were present to share health information on many topics ranging from diabetes to healthy eating and nutrition. Carrabba's Italian Grill

in Huntsville also provided in-kind contributions of food for participants.

The 100 Black Men of America greater Huntsville Chapter has adopted "Four the Future Target Areas." They are Education, Mentoring, Health and Wellness, and Economic Development. Earnest Starks has chaired this event for the last twelve years.

" We appreciate Alabama A& M University and Madison County Commission District 6 for all their support to make this event possible" said Starks.

More than 1000 people came out to support this year's fair. Members of the general public were able to receive free screening and counseling for Diabetes, Hypertension, Prostate, Heart Risk, Child Obesity, Stress, Body Mass Index, Cholesterol, HIV/AIDS, and Hearing.

NetWellness reports that the African American community often suffers a greater percentage of incidences of many of the leading health conditions in the United States. The National Center for Minority Health and Health Disparities also reports that African Americans have a higher risk of death from heart disease and strokes than whites. Over 2.2 million African Americans suffer from diabetes. It is vital that we provide opportunities for education and awareness of these disparities.

Madison County Commission District 6 commends the 100 Black Men Greater Huntsville Chapter for



Commissioner makes remarks at 100 Black Men of America Greater Huntsville Chapter 12th annual Health and Wellness Fair

their work to promote health and wellness in Madison County. Best wishes on continued success with this initiative.

## **Madison County District 6 Hosts Luncheon in honor of Dr. Louis Sullivan**

*Madison County Commission Welcomes Dr. Louis W. Sullivan*

On September 26, 2011, Commissioner Harrison hosted a luncheon for Dr. Louis W. Sullivan. Dr. Sullivan is a

renowned health expert and former founding Dean of the School of Medicine at Morehouse College in Atlanta GA. He also served as Secretary of Health and Human Services under George H.W. Bush. He has received many awards



Commissioner pictured with Dr. Louis Sullivan at Luncheon hosted by Madison County Commission District 6

and accolades for his commitment to medicine, and reducing health disparities across the board. Dr. Sullivan traveled to Huntsville to research interest in creating a statewide Sullivan Alliance.

The Sullivan Alliance was organized in 2005 to act on recommendations from the Sullivan Commission report entitled ***"Missing Persons: Minorities in the Health Professions"***. The Sullivan Alliance encourages young people, minorities in particular, to pursue health related professions. The Washington D.C. based organization seeks to strengthen the capacity of states to form partnerships required to sustain and diversify the health professional workforce, and eliminate gaps in health access.

During the luncheon, Dr. Sullivan presented information to a diverse audience of health professionals, local education agencies, elected

representatives, and higher education academia from across the state. During the presentation, he conveyed the need for more culturally competent health professionals. He listed statistics about the growing number of Hispanics and African Americans in our country. According to a 2008 New York Times Article, U.S. Census numbers suggest that by 2042, Americans who identify themselves as Hispanic, black, Asian, American Indian, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander combined outnumber non-Hispanic whites. It is crucial that we initiate solutions to meet the need of our changing population.

A major contributor to our inability to address health disparities within the United States is our critical shortage of health professionals, further exacerbated by a significant and persistent underrepresentation of ethnic and racial minorities in the nation's current Health workforce. "We must do a better job of engaging and retaining young people in the health education pipeline" said Dr. Sullivan. He estimated that each year the United States spends \$2.5 trillion on healthcare

His itinerary included visits to all major colleges in the Huntsville area. He also met with Dr. Pam Hudson, CEO of Crestwood Hospital in Huntsville. Robin Carle is the Executive Director for the Sullivan Alliance. She accompanied Dr. Sullivan to answer questions, and offer insight on current state alliances, and best practices in developing similar partnerships in the state of Alabama. She encouraged creativity in developing an alliance focused on the needs of the community. Some luncheon guests discussed the possibility of forming partnerships centered on a K-12 component. Members from the Huntsville K-12 community expressed the need to raise awareness for strong Science based curriculums in our schools, and programs that encourage K-12 students to pursue health related professions. From the meeting, there appeared to general consensus to further research possibilities to develop a statewide alliance in Alabama. Currently these alliances exist all over the country, and have created a solid framework for other states committed to eliminating shortages in health access and culturally competent health professionals.

Commissioner Harrison coordinated with Alma York, former Dean of the Oakwood College School of Nursing, to host the luncheon. State Representative

Laura Hall and Councilman Richard Showers were also present to extend special resolutions in honor of Dr. Sullivan's visit to Huntsville. The Commissioner would like to extend a special thank you to Dean Alma York. Dean York was extraordinarily instrumental in planning the trip to Huntsville. For more information about Dr. Sullivan, and the Sullivan Alliance please contact Robin H. Carle at (703)597-3778 or email: [rcarle@thesullivanalliance.org](mailto:rcarle@thesullivanalliance.org).

## **10th Annual Alabama Cooperative Extension System Successful Aging Initiative**

*Commissioner receives Beacon of Light Award.*



Commissioner pictured with Dr. Celvia Stovall and Dr. Jannie Carter of the Alabama Cooperative Extension System

Madison County Commission District 6 would like to commend the Alabama A & M University Cooperative Extension System (Urban Affairs and Nontraditional Programs) on the occasion of the 10th annual Successful Aging Initiative. This event was held on October 13, 2011 at Union Chapel Missionary Baptist Church. This initiative represents a statewide partnership designed to educate and provide resources for Alabama's aging population.

According to national statistics from the Census Bureau, the life span of older adults is increasing. Adults who live to age 65 can expect to live an

average of 18 more years. Women who reach age 85 can expect to live another seven years. It is imperative that we provide opportunities for education and dialogue on ways to better equip our seasoned citizens to live prolonged and healthy lifestyles. Knowledge and education are powerful tools required for successful living.

During the one day conference, Commissioner Harrison received the Beacon of Light Award. This honor is given to those who have committed themselves to supporting the Successful Aging Initiative throughout its tenure. Madison County District 6 extends sincere gratitude to the staff and volunteers who worked to coordinate this year's conference.

We are constantly researching opportunities to address the large segment of aging citizens. One of the biggest projects underway is the construction of the Northwest Huntsville Senior Wellness and Advocacy Center.

In 2008, Madison County District 6 was declared part of the American Economic Recovery Zone under the Community Reinvestment Act signed into law by President Barack Obama. District 6 is currently the only district in Madison County to receive the designation. District 6 received matching funds, and a low interest rate Build America Bond allocation to construct a 20,000 square ft. state of the art Senior Wellness Center. The center will be located on 26 acres of land purchased within the Cedar Point subdivision. It is estimated that this facility will be valued at \$3.5-4.0 million dollars.

The groundbreaking ceremony for the facility was held on June 9th. Once completed, the golden members of the Northwest Huntsville community will enjoy an indoor walking track, an aerobic style swimming pool, state of the art exercise equipment and many other programs designed to promote health and wellness. The center will also feature an events ballroom with a full service kitchen.



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